

MEETING MINUTES AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
WEARE NEW HAMPSHIRE
APRIL 1, 2010

FINAL VERSION

Present: Mr. George Malette, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Wendy Stevens, Mr. Ian McSweeney, Mr. Paul Gannon, guests Mr. Rick Barry, Ms. Lisa Aquizap, Mr. Dennis Smith, Mr. Jay Couture, Mr. Joel Nault, Mr. Ben Watson, Mr. Jerry Little and Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Pope.

Absent: Paul Bessey, Robert Pare, and David Trumble

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

Mr. and Mrs. Pope opened the meeting by discussing their conservation efforts with regard to the preservation of property in Weare designate as prime agricultural soil. Their efforts to market the property for sale have been hampered primarily by the original farm house on the property. The Pope's will now attempt to sell the house to an individual or firm that will relocate the period home in tact and thus allow them to sell the land cleared and ready for farming.

Mr. Ben Watson from the Slow Food organization spoke to the commission about his unique project tied directly to Weare. Mr. Watson has been working to reestablish a type of apple tree that was unique to Weare over one hundred and fifty years ago. Trees are now available to individuals and will soon be available to a select nursery. Mr. Watson also stated he would be happy to donate trees to the town.

A motion was initiated to accept minuets from the preceding committee meeting. The motion was accepted at 7:37 PM.

Commission officer positions were appointed. Chairman Drake made know that his schedule would conflict with his duties as chairman and nominated Mrs. Wendy Stevens to be the new Chair. George motioned to accept the nomination and it was seconded by Paul and all other members were in unanimity. Mr. George Mallette and Mr. Paul Gannon were retained in their current roles as Vice Chairman and Secretary. A motion was made by Ian to retain and seconded by Wendy and all other members were in unanimity.

Woodberry Garden Center was represented at the meeting and their representative expressed a desire for the center to become more involved in the AG community in Weare. Introductions were made and a few general ideas were briefly discussed. It was determined that the best COA would be for the center to attend meetings when possible and that they be included on emails and minutes.

Potential new members to the AG Commission were introduced and asked to talk about their interest in the commission.

George discussed the Agricultural Commission Workshop coming up April 7th at SNHPC. Both he and Wendy will be on the discussion panel. George mentioned Lee is really a leading Agricultural Commission who is very much in the forefront, and that Fitzwilliam just instituted their Agricultural Commission.

Jay Couture was asked to discuss the GIS Map sharing issue and the Prime Soils Map was reviewed. Jay will contact Linda Madorma at SNHPC to obtain shadelines. He also would like to review the tax map and do some hand edits in order for the maps to be correct. He noted his property was incorrectly showing on the map. Rick mentioned the National Agricultural Services has mapping information. Ian mentioned he has hand-highlighted maps with town owned conservation pieces. Jay responded he can digitize those if they are plotted. Jay will touch base with Linda. Wendy interjected will these maps be shareable among the different commissions, and Jay responded yes, that the data will be “e-mailable”. He also re-iterated that his software can build layers, similar to google earth, and you can have as many layers as needed re: business districts, agricultural inventories, SPNHF inventory, town owned inventory, etc. Jay is out of town for the next two weeks but will be in touch.

George brought up the next issue of teaching a class Edible Landscapes. Wendy said she could market it in April and we could hold it in May in order to catch the topic just as the growing season is starting. Wendy will do an e-newsletter.

George brought up a movement by other commissions is other way to have a town-wide Events Calendar. Rick and Lisa suggested a wordpress site. Rick mentioned the library has a blog and we should have one. This topic was discussed for several minutes with several differing opinions. Dennis

Smith mentioned he is not computer literate and all of these terms meant nothing to him. George mentioned we will also use Cable 6 and posters. Wendy mentioned utilizing Facebook. Rick preferred a non-member type communication. Wendy closed that she would like to see the other commissions initiate the calendar and see if it comes forth.

Luke talked with Chris Hague of the Library and they would like to go forward with an agricultural display. Wendy will get Prime Soils map on 3-fold to Chris and also communicate book suggestions from last month's minutes. Rick will check and see if he has additional books to donate.

George opened the discussion on Conservation Projects. SPNHF is looking at two projects, 1) Purington Farm and 2) Ilsley Farm. Purington Farm is prime soil and it meets corridor criteria with SPNHF however Ilsley Farm is considered endangered which is another criteria, and it is also along our Scenic By-way. Ilsley Farm (Sugar Hill Rd.) is one of the first properties seen as you cross the Weare town line. (Wendy mentioned a Gateway Zone is a zone that Concord has which means it is an introductory parcel that a person first sees when entering a city or town). Wendy said both projects require attention, George responded they may have to choose one. Ian interceded that funds could be generated if someone wanted to initiate fundraising efforts.

Next item on the agenda was the elementary school gardens. Luke has not been able to get a response and may make an in-person visit over the coming weeks.

Dennis Smith mentioned he is interested in serving on the Agricultural Commission. He moved to Weare several years ago and likes its' rural character and would like to do what he can in preserving that.

Jerry Little also expressed interest in joining the commission.

Rick Barry is also moving ahead with joining the commission.

George reviewed the rules of how many members can belong on a commission. He said the maximum number of members can be 5, with 5 alternates. Alternates can attend all meetings. The current members are:

Luke Drake
Ian McSweeney
Wendy Stevens
Paul Gannon
George Mallette

All three new members, Rick, Jerry and Dennis were give letters of recommendation.

Joel Nault mentioned he will be serving in the military and will be out of the country however is interested in joining when he returns.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Paul V. Gannon
Secretary
Weare Agricultural Commission